



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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Testimony on SB 13: An Act Expanding Economic Opportunity In Licensed Occupations
General Law Committee

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Submitted By: Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW

The National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter representing over 2,400 members is in support of SB 13, as it pertains to social work licensure, as a means to ease the unnecessary barriers to being licensed or renewing a license in Connecticut as a social worker.

Section 1 of this bill calls for having all professional and occupational license applications and renewals having online options by July 1, 2022. We fail to understand why this is not already the case and strongly support this section. There are over 7,000 licensed clinical social workers licensed in CT, all of whom apply and renew the license by paper through the mail. The expense in printing, postage and staff time to administer these licenses seem to us to be far greater cost than need be. There are also over 3,000 licensed master social workers that DPH does license and renew online at far greater efficiency. We would like to see all social work licenses to be an online process.

Section 6 will help establish consistent processes for review of an applicant's request for licensure when the applicant has a criminal record. Our experience with social workers trying to get licensed has been that applicants have had applications handled differently over the years and that it is an onerous process to get approval for an applicant who has completed any sentencing and parole and is now trying to enter the workforce. We believe in rehabilitation, and oppose ongoing punishment once a person has successfully completed their sentencing.

Section 8 allows for a licensure candidate to be issued a license by Connecticut when the applicant has established residency in the state, holds a license in good standing from another state, has held the license for at least 2 years, has passed the examination required for the license, passes any background check required and pay the required fees. In social work there is a growing movement to allow such endorsement from state to state. Each state utilizes the same social work exams of the Association of Social Work Boards and there is considerable consistency amongst states as to license requirements. We often hear from social workers with many years, sometimes decades, of experience, who are frustrated by the process of becoming licensed in Connecticut. DPH does have an alternative licensing process for applicants with at least 3 years of clinical social work experience, whereby they can substitute a letter from the employer as proof of experience and supervision, however this still requires jumping through the hoop of getting a letter

and for many social workers with multiple years of experience tracking down a former employer is not feasible. **The one change we suggest in section 6 is adding “jurisdiction” in Section 6 (1) so that applicants licensed in the District of Columbia would qualify.** Current bill language is limited to states, leaving out any non-state jurisdictions. Section 6 will go a long way toward eliminating an unnecessary, and for some, burdensome process for becoming a licensed social worker in Connecticut.